



How to Make a School Mascot

Written By: David

TOOLS:

- [Scissors \(1\)](#)
- [Sewing needle \(1\)](#)
- [Utility knife \(1\)](#)
[or craft knife](#)

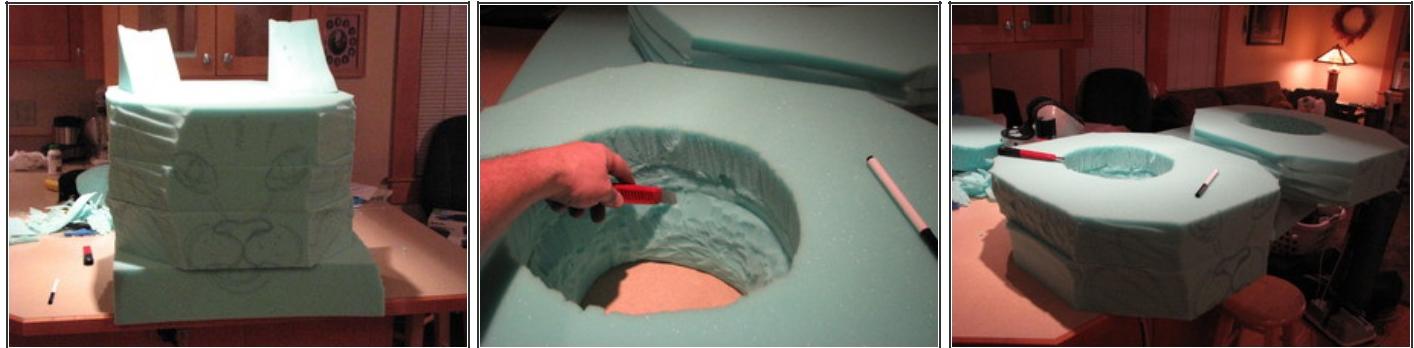
PARTS:

- [Cooling fan \(1\)](#)
[aka "muffin fan"](#)
- [Screen material \(1\)](#)
- [Speaker covers \(1\)](#)
- [Fake fur \(1\)](#)
- [Upholstery foam \(1\)](#)
- [Vinyl \(1\)](#)
- [Spray glue \(1\)](#)
[made for joining rubber foam](#)
- [Cross-stitch thread \(1\)](#)

SUMMARY

This guide will show, step by step, the basic procedure for building a lightweight foam and fur mascot head.

Step 1 — How to Make a School Mascot



- Begin by cutting and stacking squares of upholstery foam until the desired width and height is reached. Using a marker, lightly sketch out the design you wish to carve. Do this to the sides as well.
- Next, begin hollowing out the center space, starting from the bottom and working upwards layer by layer. Be sure to continually try the pieces on as you go to achieve the desired space inside.
- Continue to enlarge the interior space, matching the pieces to one another as you go along.

Step 2



- Continue to try the head on as you go to ensure a good size and fit. Don't leave it on too long or you will invariably pass out. :)
- Begin carving away foam until the desired shape begins to emerge. It will take time to get it where you want it. Enjoy the process and relax -- it will turn out fine. (At first, mine looked more like a large dingo than a cougar.)
- Keep trying it on and asking others' opinions. Besides, it's FUN walking around blind with a giant block of foam on your head!

Step 3



- As you carve, continue to sketch out the design and keep going. At this stage, it started looking more like the Flintstones' saber-toothed cat than a cougar. (I tested out the idea of fangs but decided not to use them.)
- Since my school has lots of little ones in it, I decided that our cougar needed to be more of a kitty than a killer. Eventually, you will be satisfied with the look. It just takes time.
- Note the shape at the bottom of the head where it rests on the shoulders. The head will be naturally top-heavy so you will want to compensate by keeping it as low on the body as possible.

Step 4



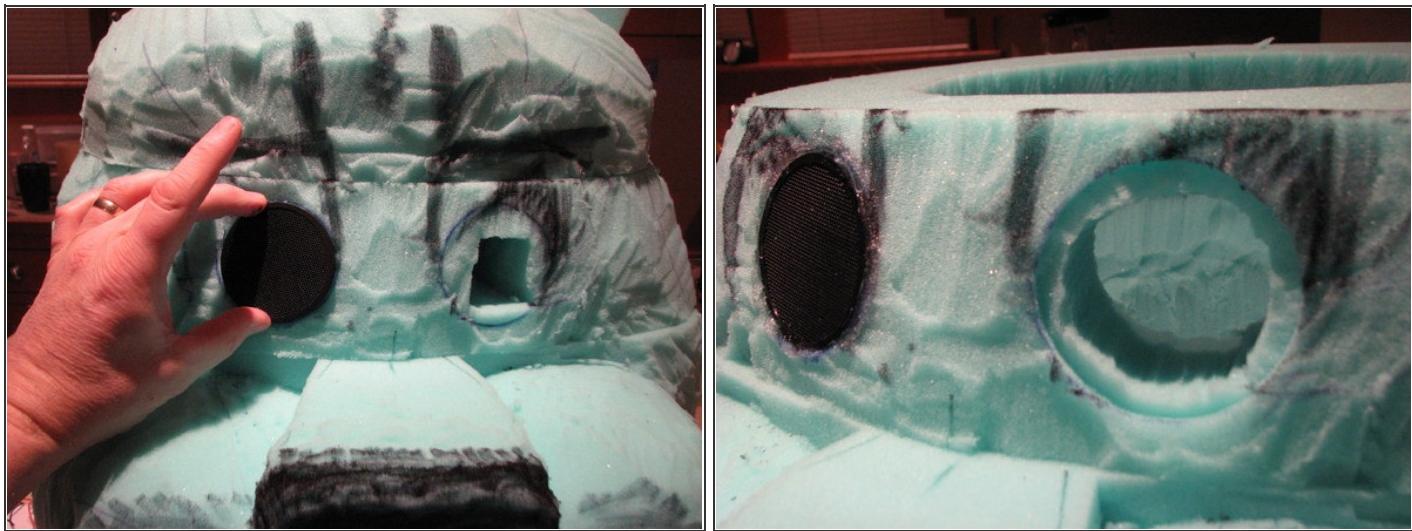
- VENTILATION IS KEY!! You will still sweat if you end up wearing it but any little bit helps. I went to my local surplus store and bought a 9-volt "muffin fan" and battery pack for two dollars. Install this in the head to vent warm air out.
- I also bought these nifty little speaker covers for 50 cents apiece. These make excellent eyes and a mouth vent.

Step 5



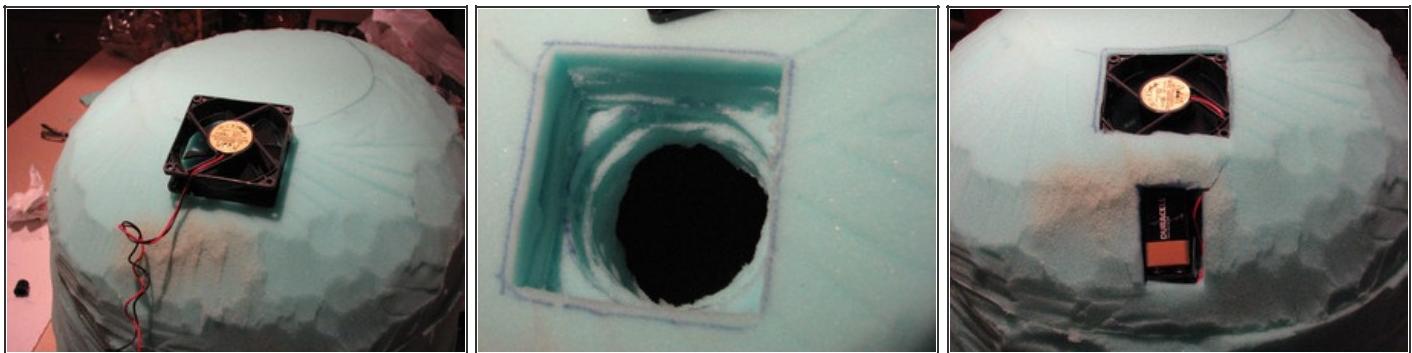
- Slice out an air vent channel in the mouth. Good for breathing and air intake to the head.
- Insert the vent into the mouth area. Create the proper space for it and glue it with plumber's "goop" or some other rubber-based glue or epoxy.

Step 6



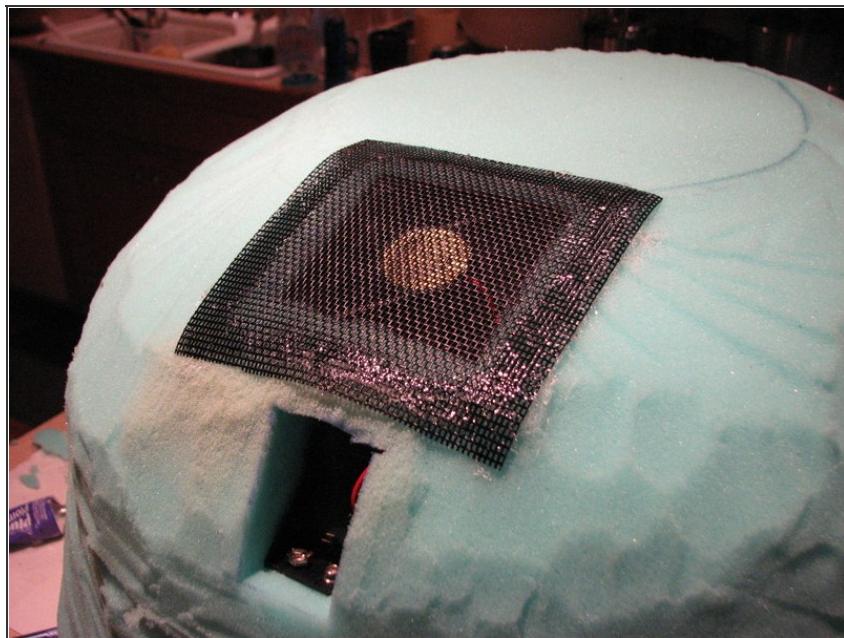
- Decide where the eyes should be and carve them out a little bit smaller than the vent covers.
- Create an inset space for them and then glue them in solidly.
- CAUTION!!! Be sure to test the eyes out before gluing them in. Be certain you can see relatively well first.

Step 7



- Insert the fan in the same way. Create a space for it with a lip to hold it. Extend the vent hole down into the top of the head.
- Create a space for the battery pack. DO NOT GLUE IT IN. Leave it loose so you can remove it to insert batteries.
- When applying fur, cover the battery space then slit a hole in the covering to remove and insert the battery.

Step 8



- Put a piece of window screen over the fan vent and glue around it liberally. Be careful to NOT get glue on the fan or it will seize up.
- I used "Pet Screen" that I found at the hardware store. It is solid and thick. Just right. You may choose to paint it the same color as the fur -- it's up to you.

Step 9



- Once you have everything glued in place and you are happy with the interior space and ventilation, you can start gluing the layers together.
- Use an industrial strength spray adhesive that is made for rubber-based foam. I bought it at the local fabric store. Just tell them what you're gluing and say you want the best.
- After all the pieces are together and dried, you can do any final shaping and carving you want. This is your last chance to get things right before adding the fur.

Step 10



- This is when your mascot COMES ALIVE!!!
- Time for a nose! I used black vinyl that I found at the fabric store. Use plumber's "goop" and glue it down well. The nose will get LOTS of kisses and squeezes! Make sure it stays on good.
- Begin gluing on the fur using the foam spray adhesive. Begin laying on the smaller areas then lay on the larger ones.
- NOTE!!! Put some kind of masking tape over the vents so they do not get glue spray on them.
- Do this in a well-ventilated area or you will get brain damage and likely hallucinate! Then who knows what it will come out looking like? XD

Step 11



- Continue adding fur. Try to put any seams you have near folds in the shape or at the back.
- With such a large area to work with it is likely you will need at least two large seams at the back corners. Glue them down well using LOTS of spray glue.
- Making the ears (optional) is essentially the same process. Mold or carve the shape you want, continually checking to see how it looks. Once you have the proper shape, apply the fur and wait for it to dry.
- Finally (and I apologize for not including photos), use a large curved upholstery needle to sew the ears onto the head. (NO GLUE REQUIRED.)
- Be sure to use thick thread to sew them on. The thread will be difficult to sew and will require pulling it very tight. I used cross-stitch thread. It worked very well. (Expect to get blisters.)

Step 12



- Create a body suit and paws (using store-bought patterns) to match.
- Naked school mascots are disturbing (in my mind at least). I went to Walmart and bought the cheapest shirt and gym shorts I could find (XXXL works best). You could also use school logo sportswear but be sure to buy the biggest possible. The fur suit (and the wearer) usually make it a pretty big animal -- XXXL is most comfortable and gives the wearer room to move.
- Unveil your new mascot and get ready for LOTS of hugs and high fives (high fours in this case).
- Have fun!!!

Step 13

- Here are some additional tips from a former mascot (Towson State University Tiger, 1987-88)
- Absolutely include the cooling fan, or you will learn, as I did, that a fur and foam suit can send you very rapidly toward heatstroke even in an air-conditioned basketball arena (my university-issued Tiger suit lacked this feature).
- You can put the view ports someplace besides the eyes if you want the mascot to be taller. The Tiger costume had white screens on the whisker pads instead of the eyes, which also provided some peripheral vision. However, I had a dead-center blind spot where the nose was. I worked around that by swaggering side-to-side whenever I walked, which people kind of expect a mascot to do anyway.
- For more bulk, you can add football or lacrosse pads under the suit. The Tiger costume also had big foam paws to cover my shoes, but I don't recommend that, as it limits your mobility.
- If you're a guy, wear a cup. Seriously. To the preschool demographic, you're a giant stuffed animal. They'll charge straight into you for a hug, slamming their foreheads you-know-where. A buddy of mine was the Baltimore Oriole the same year I was the Tiger, and he got a very painful injury that way. I learned from his experience and donned the armor.
- You can add a tail to the suit, but be sure you have some wire in it as a stiffener so it doesn't drag on the floor. Otherwise, you'll always be tripping on it.
- Wash the suit (and pads, if using) after every wearing. You will sweat profusely into it every time, and it will reek if you don't clean it.
- Have fun. A mascot suit is a license to make a complete &#^ of yourself in front of ten thousand people, with almost no accountability. I certainly took full advantage of that, and you should, too.

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